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NOTES ON THE MISSION SAN GABRIEL

BY REV. J. ADAM, V.G.

(Read Dec. 6, 1898.)

Among the old books, I have found one that says (translated into English:) "Book in which are entered the most notable things for the direction of the Missionary Fathers of this Mission of the Archangel St. Gabriel, established on the eighth of September, 1771."

The book is written by Father Francisco Palou, bosom friend and companion of Very Rev. Father Junipero Serra. He says on the first page: "In September, 1767, all the fathers being gathered together in our house of Santa Cruz of Tepic, who had left the college of San Fernando, Mex., to go to the Californias, and knowing the great distance that would exist between said missions, and our college, we agreed that on the death of one of our number at the missions, the others would offer 20 masses for the repose of his soul, and it is signed by Father Palou in the Mission of San Gabriel on the 9th of October, 1773. The first suffrage was made for Father Luis Jaume, who was killed by the Indians of San Diego at the commencement of the mission. Then suffrages were made for Father John Chrisostom Gil and Felipe Guitlon, both killed by the Apaches. We read also the masses of Father Juan Diaz, Franco Garces, Joseph Matias Moreno and Juan Barnenecke, who were killed by the Indians of the Colorado.

Masses were also said for the soul of Father Franco Pujol of the Mission of San Miguel. "It is suspected," says the writer, "that he was poisoned." We find the names of 42 missionaries for whom requiem masses were said from 1773 to 1803. Among the last we find the name of Very Rev. Father Fermin Francisco Lasuen, president of these missions (who succeeded Father Palou,) who died June 26, 1803, and also of Father Miguel Sanchez, for many years missionary at San Gabriel, who died on the 27th of July, 1803. He had been a constant sufferer from the asthma.

On page 11 we read that the Viceroy of New Spain, His Excel-

lency, Don Antonio Maria Bucareli, in a decree of May, 1772, approved the withdrawal from Lower California of the Franciscan Fathers in favor of the Dominicans, who assumed charge of said missions, while the Franciscans took charge of those of Upper California. The Viceroy and their superior general in Mexico, required each missionary to give a report of the temporal and spiritual state of his mission each year. "It being impossible," says Palou, "for the president of these missions to visit each locality, I therefore beg each missionary to send, at the end of the year, said report to the president of the missions. For this purpose I require the Rev. missionaries of this church and Mission of San Gabriel to send every year in December all information or exact report of the state of their mission, showing the number of baptisms, marriages and deaths, and the number of families, and what hopes they have of the conversion of the other gentiles of the neighboring ranchos; and if there is any obstacle in the way preventing said conversion, and that they should express themselves freely, so that the superiors may apply the remedy for the evil. They are cautioned in case of any grievance not to have recourse to the Royal Judge, but let the complaint be presented or forwarded to the Rev. president, who acts as judge for these missions; and if recourse must be made to the Viceroy, let it be made by the guardian of his council. Father Palou requires them also, in this book to report the treasures or furniture of church or sacristy, and of their houses; the number of cattle, and the number of new buildings erected since the last report; how many acres of land have been cultivated and with what results; and if their crops have failed they should report the causes thereof. If anything should happen during the year worth noticing, they are directed to include it in the report. The document should be signed by both resident missionaries and one copy should be sent to the president, and another retained for safe keeping in their archives. This document is signed by Father Palou in the Mission of the Archangel St. Gabriel on the 9th of October, 1773.

On page 12 we find the report given in December of the year 1773, of the spiritual increase in said Mission of San Gabriel since it had been founded in September, 1771, two years before. There were in that year 80 Christians, 30 adults and forty-three children. There was one marriage, and three children had died. Then it mentions among the sacred vessels, a chalice of silver, a bell of silver,

a thimble of silver; also a shell of the same material for baptismal purposes, five chosubles, etc. The number of sacred pictures is also given. Then the record describes the first church built in what is called Mission Vieja—Old Mission—whose ruins can yet be seen on the ranch of Mr. Richard Garvey, about a league distant in a southerly direction from the present mission.

This primitive church was 45 feet long and 18 feet wide, built of logs and covered with tule. There was a sacristy behind the altar. Second, a house made also of logs, 45 feet long and 17 feet wide, covered also with tule, divided into two rooms, with doors of wood separating them. Third, a storehouse of logs, 36 feet long by 15 wide, covered also with tule. Fourth, another room, 36 feet long by 18 wide, to keep seed and other things, made also of logs and covered with mud or adobe. Fifth, another room 15 feet square, of lumber, and the room covered with clay or mud, was used for a kitchen. All these buildings were inclosed within a palisade 60 yards square. Besides there were nine small houses of lumber, with mud roof, for the neophytes. The inclosure had two gates. There was another small frame house in which to keep the corn, and two other frame houses for the soldiers. Besides there was another enclosure or corral for the cattle. Then follows a list of wares for the kitchen, for the carpenter shop, and for tilling the fields. They began with eighteen yokes of oxen, plows, etc., etc. The King gave 18 head of cattle; 2 years after, in October, '73, these had increased to 38. They also had 16 saddle horses. They sowed that year one bushel and a half of corn, which bore 21 bushels (or fanegas.)

On page 17 I find that in the year 1776 (the year the United States declared their independence) the mission was moved from the old place to the location where we now see it. The change was made, says the book, because the new place was better adapted for a mission. The buildings could not, of course, be moved, so they began at once with great zeal to erect the needed edifices, at the new site. They first built a house of adobe 50 yards long and 6 yards wide, three and a half yards high, divided into three rooms, one for keeping the seeds, another for tools and the third for the Fathers to dwell in. They built also a chapel ten varas long by six wide, roofed with tule. A corral was erected not far away for the cattle. In 1796 the chapel gave way to a larger church, with walls of adobe, 108 feet long by 21 feet wide, with a roof of tiles.